



Sciences Po Bordeaux

2023-2024

PREPARATION
exchange application process
I firstly looked at all countries and universities possible for me to go to and got my information from the UU page. When I made my decision I applied through Osiris.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
I received great support from my sending faculty and could write them about any questions I had. I received responses mostly within four working days. We also had a general meeting about the application and sending process which was helpful. But all the information is also sent to you or you can find yourself on the UU website.
academic preparation
I didn't really do any academic preparation.
language preparation
I refreshed my French a bit, but I'm doing the English track so it isn't super necessary and people in Bordeaux are known to speak good English in comparisson to the rest of France. But still it really helps a lot to speak good French.
finances
I prepared all my grants well before and with these I am able to not work on my exchange.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
All the information was communicated quite late to me. But when the information started to come in it went alright. The contact person at Sciences Po is really responsive so that was really nice. The content of the courses is really focussed on lectures and facts and not so much about arguments and logic. Which is quite getting used to when you come from a Dutch university.
academic quality of education activities
The quality of the courses is low in comparison to the Netherlands. If you are a bachelor student you can easily enrol in master courses. Educational activities are really nice here. There are a lot of speeches/interviews held every week. Also there are so many student associations who also organize educational activities.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
If you want to I think you could receive quite some counselling. But mostly I figured everything out with the Erasmus students. You will be dropped in a big groupchat that will really help you.
transfer of credits
The transfer of credits is alright. You can do extra work in almost every course to make it worth more credits and the courses are easier here than in the Netherlands so this extra work you can probably handle.



STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The welcome and orientation programme was really great from my perspective. We got free breakfast and a speech of the director on the first day. During the first week there were a lot of information lectures and French classes. On the weekend of the first week we went to Dune the pilat which was really great and a good meeting spot. This was organized by a student association called Erasmix. These are French students who will be organizing a lot of events for you.

accommodation

Start early with finding accommodation, it's not the most difficult place for housing, but also definitely not the easiest place. And it's a lot of paperwork and guaranties to get a place. I got my room on Studapart.

leisure & culture

The French culture is really about going out to eat and drink. It's a beautiful city with a lot of cool bars and places to go to. Also sporting culture is really great here, so definately go to a rugby and football match. As a student you also get discounts for a lot of things. So always ask and look for that. The city even organizes free days for students for some events.

suggestions/tips

Bar a vin, opera, darwin, iboat, rugby match.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes definately, the university and the students are really alive and there is always a lot happening. Also the city is super pretty and alive as well, with a lot of things to do for students. Even if you are afraid of the language barrier, go for it. They speak alright English here and it won't be that much of a obstacle.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Enroll in as many student associations and yes it's a lot of paperwork for housing. You really have to give that much information.



PREPARATION

exchange application process

The exchange application process went very smoothly. The documents are easy to follow, the instructions are on websites and in the mails once received and the study advisor helps with all kinds of questions and dilemmas. All in all the exchange application process is very easy and self-explanatory and there was always someone ready and eager to help.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The preparation seminars helped a lot, so I would recommend going to them. Furthermore, our study advisor was very helpful as he answered all questions – even when redundant – with patience. All in all the counseling and support provided by UU were great.

academic preparation

As a student of the study programme Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE), there was close to no academic preparation for me to do. PPE had adequately prepared me for the various politics and economics courses which one could choose from at Sciences Po Bordeaux. I believe this will be the case for most people going on exchange at the Sciences Po Bordeaux, as it is a faculty-wide* exchange destination. *It's a Governance destination, not a REBO destination.

language preparation

I had all my courses in French. This was on purpose, as I wanted to improve my French. This is also the reason why I wanted to attend Sciences Po Bordeaux, as they offer a specifically tailored French Track programme to all non-French exchange students. There is also the English Track, in which one can choose more English courses, however, I highly recommend the French Track as it really improves one's understanding of French. As preparation for my exchange I had had six years of French in high school and in the summer before my exchange, I took 40 hours of online classes. This really helped in overcoming the initial talking barrier. I would recommend doing something similar or reading up on some French from high school! *Please see the language requirements and information for each track on the destination page.

finances

With the Erasmus+ Grant, the money I receive from my government, and some pocket money from my parents I could easily survive and live nicely in Bordeaux. There are plenty apartments and rooms on all kinds of webpages, and living is less expensive than in the Netherlands. However, groceries are much more expensive than in the Netherlands. I spent 520€ a month for my room (but friends of mine had much cheaper ones 300-400€), and around 300€ a month on groceries and other activities. I also had some personal reserves I used for traveling and other activities.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I went on exchange to Bordeaux in the fall semester of 2023/2024. My mobility started on the 29th of August 2023. However, the first week was an intro week, with all kinds of activities and some language level tests (oral and written). During this period one also receives the list with the names of all available courses for your track (without explanations on the courses though). On Monday 4 September 2023, the courses start and all the French students also come to the university for the first time after summer break. The first two weeks are so-called "sit in weeks", where one can go to all courses available to your track. Sadly this is the only way to receive information on the courses, such as knowing how the course will be, or what will be taught. The Sciences Po Bordeaux does not offer a catalogue with explanations on the courses and it does not make all syllabusses available from the beginning. So for the courses that only start mid-semester and only give 2 instead of 4 ECTS, you often cannot look at the syllabus before your course starts. This is incredibly annoying as one has to trust the name of the course or not take it at all. However, if one decides to take a course like that and then



decides to drop it after it started, because it is not what one expected (like I did), then that is a bit of an organizational mess. The course will appear as not attended 0/20 in your Exchange transcript. However, if you took enough courses with more than the required amount of ECTS, such as me who took 36 and decided to drop a 4 and a 2 ECTS course, then all is fine as my study programme only required me to get 30 ECTS. So the courses I dropped won't count towards my needed 30 ECTS, meaning they won't show up on my Utrecht transcripts. However, you should be aware of this!

academic quality of education activities

The educational style at Sciences Po Bordeaux is very different to UU. While the courses in PPE consist of a few lectures and mostly seminars, all my courses at Sciences Po Bordeaux were lectures. Furthermore, there is a somewhat weird and hierarchical atmosphere in the lecture halls, as no one asks questions, only the professor talks, and everyone transcribes every single word the professor is saying, as every detail the professor talks about might be part of the exams. Personally, I did not like the way they taught the classes, however, I also took part in a special programme called Attestation d'Études Politiques (AEP), which is taught in a more seminar-like style and has a more UU-like classroom atmosphere. For this programme I had to pass a written exam in the intro week, as it is selective. Only 22 students get in. This is why there is more interactivity and a less frontal teaching style. For the people with an already rather good French level who want to improve their French, I can recommend applying for this programme. There is more information on the Sciences Po Bordeaux website on this.

On the other hand, all the native students were incredibly helpful and offered to send me their notes when asked. So you can rely on the native students when you feel lost or overwhelmed. Also, the French exams and papers that the exchange students have to write in the French track are easier than the ones for native students and the marking grid is also adjusted to the exchange students' less elaborate French.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Again, the support from my native class mates was phenomenal. They sent me notes and offered to help me with all kinds of things. I can really recommend talking with them as they are incredibly eager to get to know Erasmus students. Also, one can really improve one's French this way. This was also the only sort of support or counselling I really needed and asked for. However, the study advisor Mme. Dubâa is also always there to help!

transfer of credits

The transfer of credits did not go as smoothly as hoped. I had planned my courses in Bordeaux so that I would finish with precisely 30 ECTS when passing all exams. I passed all the courses. However, one course was rejected. This is the course "Stage d'Intégration", which means integration week. This was an extra week before regular classes start in which we had intensive French classes, French level tests, and social and cultural activities. It was by far the most exhausting week of Erasmus. Yet, it was rejected as a course, meaning that I am lacking 2 ECTS, leaving me with 28 ECTS from my Exchange. I am currently still in the process of bargaining with the Board of Examiners about my integration week, however, it is looking bleak. So I can recommend not to count the ECTS of the integration week towards the amount of ECTS you need and want from your exchange. Furthermore, the transfer of my transcript of records by Science Po Bordeaux took more than one and a half months, which has caused quite some delay and problems for me.

As I am still in the process getting all my exchange courses registered in my UU transcript of records, I cannot give an absolute statement about how it went. However, my preliminary statement would be that it went somewhat patchy. I believe it is very helpful to ask your study advisor at the beginning of your exchange which kind of courses are generally accepted and which are not. This way you can avoid my problem and plan your schedule at the destination without any delays or problems.



STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

As mentioned above, there was an introduction week, which was really nice. The Erasmix Association prepared activities such as trips or parties for us to mingle and get to know one another. However, there was also a more academic part to the introduction week, namely the intensive French courses, French-level tests and the cultural activities. There was one oral and one written test and another non-mandatory test for the AEP. They are all on the same day. Apart from this somewhat stressful day, the intro week was extremely nice and well organised!

accommodation

I booked my accommodation via the website Studapart. This worked really well and safely! I can recommend this web page. I lived a bit outside of the centre. Most of my friends lived in the very city centre. I had a bike though, so I could easily get to the city or to uni. Also public transport works well. I paid 520€ (all inclusive) per month for my accommodation, which was a pretty good price.

leisure & culture

Bordeaux has such amazing cultural activities to offer, ranging from museums, to exhibitions, to concerts, to visits of wine chateaus and much more. The sea is also close by and there are busses going from Bordeaux to the seaside and back quite frequently and a one-way ticket is only 2,30€. The Erasmix Association and the ESN also prepared a lot of activities and the associations of Sciences Po Bordeaux also offer an incredibly large amount of leisure activities. I can safely say that I was never bored in Bordeaux. If anything, I might have been a bit overwhelmed at times from all the leisure and culture activities – but in a good way!

suggestions/tips

Do, visit and travel as much as you can when you are here. There is so much to explore and see in and around Bordeaux. Do not stress about the exams too much, until they actually approach. Once they do, you can get some French students' elaborate notes to help you study. Furthermore, bond with the Frenchies. They want it and your French wants it! So just go ahead.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I would highly recommend this university and destination. The university, despite its very French teaching style, offers incredibly rich and diverse courses in French and English. Furthermore, the French Track and the AEP are great ways to improve your French. The city is just absolutely stunning and lovely to live in. Be aware of the heat in the city in the first few weeks you are there. Due to a lot of concrete and very little trees and green in the city, it heats up quite a lot. But you can cool off by going to the sea or to Le Lac Bordeaux. Go to Bordeaux for your French and take the challenge of AEP and the French Track, it is doable! :)

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Be it Bordeaux or any other exchange destination: Go on exchange, you will not regret it! The people you will meet and the things you will experience will most likely count towards some of the best time of your studies. I know this is the case for me!



PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process was quite easy. The communication with both Utrecht University staff and the coordinator at Sciences Po Bordeaux was good. In both cases, the people were helpful and attentive to personal circumstances.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Utrecht University has an extensive preparation programme for the exchange semesters. Meetings and long documents were organised. And, my study advisor helped me with everything as well. Therefore, I was happy about the support from Utrecht University.

academic preparation

I understand this in the sense of whether or not my courses at Utrecht University prepared me academically for the courses at Sciences Po Bordeaux. I would say that the French University system is quite different than that in the Netherlands. There are many more courses going on at the same time and for the period of a whole semester. For me the courses were in French and it is much more about big lectures of just listening and learning content by heart. Therefore, it was a different kind of challenge, but also nice and manageable. Content wise, I had a good foundation by my UU courses.

language preparation

I did a one month long online preparation course to refresh my French. The platform is called Lingoda and I think I did around 40 lessons in a month. Next to that I watched a French reality TV show (The Circle on Netflix), which helped a lot and motivated me because the series was funny and I also learned a bit of slang that I then heard and used in Bordeaux as well.

finances

I knew that I was going to want to explore and do a few little trips in France, so I made sure to spend little money in the months before the exchange. With this and the Erasmus money, it was financially possible for me to participate in events and little trips in France. I would say that living costs in general were similar to those in Utrecht.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

At first it was a bit overwhelming to choose all the courses, because there were many to choose from and it was quite an effort to visit some before choosing and scheduling the timetable. Nevertheless, at Sciences Po Bordeaux everything was well organised and the rest of the semester went smoothly. Content wise, the courses offered were interesting. But, often in the lectures I could not understand much, because the teacher talked a bit too quickly in French, so that was a shame.

academic quality of education activities



The quality of the education was good, but I had some struggles following the lectures, because of the French language. If you are considering to do the AEP-programme: I would recommend it because those are small scale lectures, the assignments are more diverse (presentations, papers..) and spread out throughout the semester, so it is more of what we are used to in the Netherlands. It is only for international students, so the French level is easier to follow. Attendance is strictly required and the content was very focused on France (society, Politics, Political History, language etc. with more and less interesting topics).

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The support at Sciences Po Bordeaux was good. When I needed help from the exchange programme coordinator, I would always get an answer. There is not really a close connection and much support from the lecturers, as the lecture groups are big. But in the AEP programme, the professors were supportive.

transfer of credits

I have not yet gotten my grades or to the point of transferring the credits. One potential issue is that the Board of Examiners has for now declined that the integration course at Sciences Po Bordeaux indeed deserves 2 ECTS points. It is yet to be seen if they can be convinced otherwise by my explanation.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There is an integration week that is intense, because there are French lessons, French tests (to assess the level and group for French lessons in the following Semester), cultural events (like a city tour etc.), organisational and methodological meetings and social events (also until late in the night). The intensity explains why there are 2 ECTS points granted by Sciences Po Bordeaux. It is an exhausting week, but it was also a great opportunity to meet people, so I wouldn't have wanted it otherwise. On the weekend there was even a big day trip to Arcachon and the Dune du Pilat, so really a great Welcome by the "Erasmix Team" at the University.

accommodation

I found a room via the site "Studapart." The pro was that the house I lived in was beautiful and I had a great time with my roommates, but the landlord was chaotic: we didn't have warm water for the first month and she is trying to not give us back a large part of our deposit. I also heard experiences of other international students who had similar issues, so I think it is something that happens a lot. But I think the location you choose is important for your overall experience and it is better to go look for something yourself (despite some struggles), than to go for student housing that is far away from the center and in the Sciences Po area. That is, if you are a student who wants to really get to know Bordeaux and party there etc.

leisure & culture

There is always a lot to do in Bordeaux, I feel like I don't know everything yet and there is still a lot to explore. The student life and culture there is amazing, a lot of young people and activities to do. The city is gorgeous, even just walking around is amazing, especially during sunset. The city is absolutely magical. There is also a lot of free time next to the classes, especially if you only need to pass and therefore choose not to put as much effort as usual.

suggestions/tips



Check out the museums, especially the Bassins de Lumieres. The karaoke nights organised by Erasmix are great, as well as the apartment and pub crawl events. I-boat, the grizzly pub, all the cute little game bars, bar à vin. Trips to the beaches are great to do with friends (Lacanau and Dune du Pilat especially) and there is incredible nature in the countryside in the middle of France as well.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I would absolutely recommend! It is such a cool, beautiful and vibrant city to explore. It is easy to get to know other exchange student and French students due to the integration week, Erasmix activities and all the committees. I learned a lot from the experience and met fantastic people. The Erasmus grant and fact that it is quite close to the Netherlands makes it affordable. Go for it if these points are important to you.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you have the idea of going some weeks earlier before university starts in the end of August, only do that if you love heat. It was like 40 degrees in August and the heat was standing in the city.



2022-2023

PREPARATION
exchange application process
The exchange application process was clearly structured, and there were a few deadlines for the documents to hand in. It's all not difficult, but my advice is to be on time with handing in the documents and to take a good look at which documents you need to submit.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
The support and counselling at Utrecht University was good. When you have questions or uncertainties I really advise to contact your study advisor or the International Office of UU. They'll reply quickly and they can take away a lot of worries. Studying abroad means that you need to be aware of what documents you need, and they have the knowledge about that.
academic preparation
I didn't need much academic preparation, since I already had 3 years of study experience in Bestuurs- en Organisatiewetenschap (Governance). The courses in Sciences Po all had a good introduction, and in the courses you'll use the academic skills you already have experienced in Utrecht.
language preparation
For the study program I wanted to follow, I had to have B2-level in French. So I participated in a DELF-exam, and I passed it. So, for my program it was mandatory to have a certain level in French, but I would recommend to try to improve your French language before going to Bordeaux, even though you want to follow an English program. It can be really helpful to have some basic knowledge in French then.
finances
It is important to submit the documents on time to get the Erasmus grant. I also got a grant for travelling to Bordeaux by train (Travel Green Grant). The train connection is very good, which is definitely recommended even if you don't get a grant. In addition, I think it's a good idea to make a budget for yourself a few weeks before departure with all the fixed costs you'll have in Bordeaux (housing, etcetera). Because you'll probably spend more money than usually because of the trips and other things you want to do there. It's good to kind of have an overview. Overall, prices were just slightly higher than in the Netherlands. There are big differences between the different supermarkets, try out a few different shops in the first week and you will find out which is best for you.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
I participated in the study program 'Attestation d'études politiques'. In this programme, I took French spoken courses, 34 ECTS. This programme focused on interactive teaching, and had three courses in which there were many presentations to be done. I found this to be very instructive and good for my language, and I recommend it to everyone interested. You have to take an entrance exam for it, which consists of a written and oral part. There is also the option to choose English and other French subjects. As for me, the courses were very interesting. They offer other things that are not offered in Utrecht, such as courses on political communication. French fellow students were very open and interested in the foreign students. It was really educative to be in a French educational environment. Before you take the exams, I would recommend checking with the lecturer about the content of the exam, often he can say something about the type or number of questions. For a foreign student, this is good to know.
academic quality of education activities
I think the academic quality was really good. However, the way of teaching many subjects is different from that in the Netherlands. You have more subjects than usual in a short period (I had 8), each of which is only 2 hours



a week. During lectures, the lecturer is mainly speaking, and you are expected to take notes. What the lecturer says is the class material, there is little additional literature. French subjects are therefore sometimes difficult to follow at first, but you quickly get used to it. At first, it feels a bit unnatural to read little literature, but the teacher often provides an interesting lesson in which literature is directly linked to an example.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The support was good at Sciences Po Bordeaux as well. I received the first email from the supervisor from Sciences Po in early May, who sent all the necessary information and deadlines for submitting documents. We could go to this supervisor with all our questions, and they were answered very quickly. Questions for accommodation could also be addressed to her. In the first weeks in Bordeaux, you also get a lot of information from the supervisor, and in addition you are paired with a French student, as a buddy. So you have a lot of contact opportunities and are not left alone.

transfer of credits

At the time of writing, the credits have not yet been transferred, so I can't say anything about that at the moment. This will happen in the coming weeks. However, I received the marks obtained for the courses at the end of January, so 6 weeks after the exams. I received a summary with the courses and the marks obtained, and later I received my grade list and AEP-certificate at home.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

From day 1 at Science Po, I noticed that the French fellow students and teachers were very open, and curious about my background. I really liked the introduction week, there were fun activities and parties organised by Erasmix, which allowed you to get to know many people very quickly. I quickly built up a group of friends, with people all over the world I am still in touch with. During the introduction week we also learned a lot about French culture, made trips around Bordeaux and there was a lot of time to explore the city together. From the university, everything was also well organised, and the communication was clear. We had the first two weeks to join as many different courses we wanted, without any obligations, before making a final choice which courses to take. I look back on it with great pleasure.

accommodation

Finding accommodation, on the other hand, was very difficult. I would advise really looking for an accommodation in time, there is also a shortage of accommodation in Bordeaux. In the end, almost everyone manages to get one, but it really takes some effort. The university gives tips on which websites you can search for accommodations, these sites are good. You'll also get a French buddy in July, I want to advise to ask your buddy if she has connections with people who know rooms that are for rent. That can really help.

leisure & culture

In terms of leisure & culture, Bordeaux is perfect. It is a beautiful, typically French city with many museums, pretty squares, parks and a beautiful and lively city centre. There is also plenty of culture to discover in the surrounding area, especially when it comes to wine. I would definitely recommend joining a tour of various vineyards, which is a must-see. You can also join various associations in university. For example, I became a member of the wine tasting association. I would recommend to do something like that as well if you come to Bordeaux!

suggestions/tips

would definitely recommend becoming active in one of the (sports)associations within Sciences Po. Sciences po has many different associations, from dancing to cheese tasting. I was active in the football team and the wine tasting association. I enjoyed that really much, and it was a really good way to get to know a lot of people quickly. The French within those associations were very open, and really liked it when foreign students joined. Besides, Bordeaux is close to some beautiful places, in the south west of France but also in Spain. The train



connections in France are really good, so take advantage of that! Also, invest well in the first weeks, the introduction week and the time afterwards. You'll make a lot of friends there, because after all, everyone there is looking for new contacts and most people don't know anyone yet. Being at all the activities helps a lot in making new friends, which you will have a lot of fun with during the rest of your time in Bordeaux.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes, definitely! Bordeaux is a very diverse city, with something for everyone. Culture, sport, nightlife, shopping and many other things. The surrounding area is beautiful as well, many beautiful villages and cities accessible. In addition, the university is very good, with high-level teaching, and often with an perspective we don't have in Utrecht. The French students and teachers are, contrary to what some people sometimes say, very open and interested in the foreign students. I had a fantastic time, thoroughly enjoyed French life and the people I met.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

The most important tip I want to give: get out of your comfort zone! Other foreign students in Bordeaux are in the same situation as you, and the French students actually find it incredibly fun when you join French life as a foreign student. Profitez-en !



PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process was very easy. There were clear instructions for the deadlines and how to make choices for different institutions. Although I was indecisive about my main choices, I would say it was rather an easy process.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Utrecht University was very helpful with specific questions about my exchange. Even though they were pretty quick to respond in most cases, there were some times that they were too busy to respond to all the students.

This caused somewhat stress since there were a lot of deadlines during the application process.

academic preparation

For academic preparation, I went through the courses my host university offered in previous years. This helped me to have an idea for any background knowledge I would need. For some courses, I started going through academic materials such as some books in order to get a general idea about the concepts.

language preparation

For language preparation, I dedicated some of my time to study French online. There are many resources that were easy to find online. Some of the resources were educational videos and grammar quizzes online. This helped me to regain my French skills and made my transition process to speaking French a bit more easier.

finances

For finances, I tried to calculate the general living costs and what is left from my savings and the Erasmus grant.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The requirements and expectations for courses were clear. The content of the courses were very understandable.

academic quality of education activities

The academic quality was good although a lot of times the way of teaching was different from Utrecht University. It was more lecture-based than seminar-based teaching, which was something I was not used to it. Many professors had good English language skills however sometimes I had the feeling that the teaching would be better if they were speaking in French.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Counselling & support was very good. All my questions were answered pretty quickly.

transfer of credits

A lot of courses allowed me to use the credits in Utrecht University except a few such as the Introduction Week Courses.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The welcome & orientation programmes were very nice. Erasmus organization in Bordeaux does a lot in order to integrate new Erasmus students.

accommodation



Like lots of other people, I did not manage to get into student housing that is located next to the school. Therefore, the housing search was very tiring additionally it took a lot of time to find a proper place. However, the place I found, in the end, was an hour away from school so it was not the most ideal.

leisure & culture

Bordeaux is a city that is full of culture. There are lots of cultural events and festivals that are happening many times a month. It is a very nice city to get to know French culture and its traditions.

suggestions/tips

My suggestion to experience a good student life is to be present on as many occasions as possible. Additionally, I would suggest going out of your way to look for new events and activities. The city and university offer a lot

but you need to be aware of where they post these events etc.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I would recommend this university if someone wants to study abroad for sure. It was a very nice experience. However, if someone is more academically focused and wants to improve their French, I would suggest looking at other options in France. This is because the university offers a lot of courses in English and this makes it a bit more difficult to improve french language skills.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

I would recommend looking for a place to live in advance even though it is not finalized yet that you are studying there. It is very hard to find a place. I would also recommend choosing the French track if you want to improve your French, but as far as I observed French courses require very much improved French language skills. Additionally, it can easily create additional stress if you are not on a specific French level yet.



PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process went smoothly. I initially applied for the English track at Sciences Po, meaning that my courses were going to be in English. It was one of the defining factors why I chose this university instead of other universities in France. I did have French in high school but I did not consider my level to be sufficient to be able to follow French taught courses. However, since my only proof of my language level was my high school diploma and the university had a policy of enrolling all students with a level of B1 or above in the French track, I faced some difficulties to show proof of the fact that my level was not that high anymore. After a long email exchange with the university, I managed to get enrolled in the English track after all, which was a relief to me. *

*NB IEO: The International Exchange Office cannot guarantee that an exception can be made. Please carefully read through the language requirements on the destination page before applying, and please be aware that students who had French in high school might be required to follow the French track.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The international exchange office at Utrecht University was always ready to help and relatively quick with responding to emails.

academic preparation

Academically I honestly did not prepare anything before going abroad since the courses I was taking were similar to the ones I had been taking in Utrecht and I already had background knowledge in most of them.

language preparation

Since my courses were going to be in English I did not have to prepare myself too much for it, especially because my study program in Utrecht is also an English taught Bachelor. I did revise my French skills a bit to prepare for my non-academic life in Bordeaux.

finances

I applied for the Erasmus grant which I partly received in the beginning of October. Additionally, my parents supported me financially which helped me a lot.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

During the first two weeks of the semester we were able to try out different courses after which we had to register for them. This helped a lot in choosing courses that really interested me after having gained some insights. Therefore, I also changed some courses that I had initially applied for and ended up choosing different international relations courses such as "International interventions in Africa" and "Critical security studies". I also chose courses such as "Global politics of the ecological transition" which I found really interesting. In addition, a French language course was mandatory which I really enjoyed. Overall, I attended seven courses throughout the semester for which I got assessed at the end of the semester in December. The system was definitely different to what I was used to since I had more courses in total at the same time and throughout a longer time period than in Utrecht. However, it was also interesting to have a variety of courses and get many different insights and complete different courses compared to the ones offered in Utrecht.

academic quality of education activities

I would say the courses were definitely of a high quality and the professors were all very knowledgeable in their field. Although the university mainly offers French taught courses, teaching in English was no problem for the professors and did not lower the quality of the content that was taught. However, the courses were more lecture based and not as interactive as I was used to back in Utrecht.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The international students coordinator at the receiving university was very helpful and always ready to find solutions to problems.



transfer of credits

I opened a case on Osiris to transfer the credits from the receiving university to Utrecht University and am currently still waiting for the transcript from my receiving university to finalize the process.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

My exchange semester started off with an orientation week in which we had French classes every day and many different social events, including day trips in order to get to know other students and the city better. I am very grateful to have had this kind of start into the semester because I got to know a lot of people and got more familiar with the city through this way.

accommodation

I was struggling a lot to find accommodation in Bordeaux because the housing market is very tough. I was initially relying on getting into the student residences offered by the university. However, I found out at the end of June that I had not gotten in which made looking for a place more challenging because of the limited time period. I ended up renting a long-term airbnb with a friend of mine.

leisure & culture

Bordeaux offers many different kinds of cultural activities, such as a variety of museums and theaters. In addition, it is known for its festivals, especially in the summer time. When I first arrived in Bordeaux I could not keep up with all the events that were happening throughout the city. Furthermore, Sciences Po has many different associations, which everyone is welcome to join. The associations mainly function in French, which does provide a good opportunity to practice the language and get to know French students, too.

suggestions/tips

Since the housing situation was very challenging in my opinion, I would advise to start searching for a place early enough in order to avoid stress. Furthermore, I would suggest moving to Bordeaux at least a few days before the orientation week starts in order to get familiar with the new environment and settle down a bit. In addition, I would recommend to join various social events in the beginning of the semester since those help a lot to make friends. In terms of leisure and culture, I would suggest getting the "carte jeune" which students can get for free and which allows you to have discounts on various cultural and social events, such as museums.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I would definitely recommend Sciences Po as a university and Bordeaux as an exchange destination to others. The university courses were really interesting and helped me gain knowledge from a new perspective. Regarding student life, Bordeaux is an ideal destination because the city offers a lot for young people and is very vibrant. Furthermore, Sciences Po's own Erasmus association organized a lot of social events which made it easier to get to know people and the other associations offered additional opportunities to socialize and get involved with likeminded people.

If one makes sure to start looking for housing early enough, one of the biggest challenges can be avoided more easily. Besides that, one of the only negative sides of choosing to study in Bordeaux is accepting that the semester will be quite short and already end in mid-December, just once you have started to get the hang of everything and get used to the place.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

-



PREPARATION

exchange application process

The application process is pretty straightforward. Applying via Osiris is easy and i got a relatively quick response from the host-uni that i was accepted, which was nice. If you follow the steps as described online, it should be easy.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Counselling and support was great, thanks to Hetty Faber my student counselor. My advice: talk to your student advisor if you have any questions

academic preparation

The academic preparation is not hard, since i got to choose my subjects and most of the subjects i already had fairly good background information about. Unless you choose heavy law-subjects or economic ones, you should be fine

language preparation

For my language prep I studied French during the summer. Definitely listen to french as much as possible, since listening will be 70% of your learning process. Also write french if you can in order to detect where you make mistakes

finances

Financially Boreaux is not more expensive than utrecht, so don't worry about that. Food is the same price and housing would be the same as well.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The study programme is easy, depending on how many subjects you follow. I took 32.5 ects in courses, so it was not too tough for me. However it is extremely hard to plan courses, since most courses are scheduled for Monday and Tuesday. This gives you a difficult time when interested in overlapping courses. So the most important thing is to plan your courses carefully beforehand. You can find available courses on their website.

academic quality of education activities

Science po is supposed to be a "grande école" which means one of the best universities in France, however this is not reflected in the quality. The main focus is knowledge reproduction and totally not analytical/critical thinking. Often teachers will lecture and students need to copy exactly what they say. Exams will ask you for dates and facts and will not ask you to use the information you absorbed, which in my eyes is an outdated system. Also interaction with teachers is minimal.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Low support, emailing people costs time and responses are slow. If you have problems you can contact your student's advisor for international students, but she doesn't speak english, so be aware.

transfer of credits

transfer of credits is easy and happens automatically

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

the orientation week was nice and well planned. The internationals definitely formed a little community and they often organised multiple parties which were fun.

accommodation



Accomadation is awfull to find. If you don't get university housing at campus like me, they won't help you find anything. So defenitly START IN EARLY JUNE WITH YOUR SEARCH FOR HOUSING. Ive seen multiple people who had to crach at peoples couches for 2-3 weeks in the beginning. not fun.

leisure & culture

There're a lot of little bars and fun musea around in the city. In the summer you can go to the beach and surf and you can taste the most wines you've ever tasted and will taste in your entire life. There're not really clubs, which is a shame, but there're moreee than enough fun places to do drinks and dance.

suggestions/tips

Start looking for housing early, try living in either Pessac or the centre, but other locations kinda suck, since they're far away. Also bring you umbrella! After oktober it starts raining non-stop. Try going for a study association in order to speak more french.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Personally i'd not go here, since i thought bordeaux was too little and i didn't improve my french as much as i'd hoped. I did have a ok time with the internationals and had a sweet place in the centre, but it's not as crazy as i had imagined before.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you just wanna experience french culture, bordeaux in a ok place, but if you're looking for a crazy semester go for paris, bordeaux is pretty small.



PREPARATION
exchange application process
<p>The application process was clearly indicated on the website and I was able to hand in everything completely and in time. Yet as the process could be different per faculty and location, it was necessary to closely look at which exact documents you needed to submit, and where to send them to. Thus, I recommend reading the guidelines carefully for each location, that you are applying to.</p>
counselling & support at Utrecht University
<p>The contact with the International Office and Erasmus team at UU was swift and always helpful. Also, in case you have questions and concerns, it is always best to reach out and make sure, you are on the right track.</p>
academic preparation
<p>Since I knew, that I would follow mainly political science courses at ScPoBx, I did not need much academic preparation, since I already studied PPE. In hindsight, there was also no extensive preparation necessary, as all courses offered a good introduction to the theme and arising questions could be dealt with individually, or with the help of your peers.</p>
language preparation
<p>During the introduction at ScPoBx, there are language courses available to all students. After a language test, you are put into a specific French as a Foreign Language (FLE) group based on your score. If you make it into the AEP/CEP group, then you will not follow the additional FLE course, however, the course Langue et civilisation française is mostly a language course on a more advanced level.</p> <p>In general, the programme, in both the English and French track, is very focussed on improving your French language skills. With the classes, I followed and the fact, that the vast majority of my courses have been French-taught, my level of French has improved rapidly and immensely. While the first weeks may feel a little rushed or overwhelming, you will get used to the pace very quickly.</p> <p>In all cases, if you already took French in high school or university and have a level above A2 or B1, they usually expect you to follow the French track. Even when you initially applied for the English track, the receiving institution may transfer you to the other track, so just be aware of that. Personally, even if you are not as confident in your skills, I would recommend the challenge but if your last lessons reach very far back, or you fail the introductory language test, you can still organise a transfer to the English track during your stay, if all sides deem it necessary and useful.</p>
finances
<p>The level of weekly spending for groceries and household supplies is roughly the same as in the Netherlands, if not slightly higher. Especially cosmetics, and drug store products, such as shampoo, cleaning supplies etc. are more expensive. At the beginning of your stay, your expenses will of course be higher than usual, since you will have to get a lot of basic stuff, additional furniture, cutlery, and so on. Getting your things second-hand or from other students, that are currently moving is always handy and much cheaper, too.</p> <p>It is quite common to go or eat out with friends more often, so reserving a certain amount for that each month, is highly advised. Also, you will want to travel around France and to the seaside. So planning that ahead of your stay can also be practical.</p> <p>Paying by card or credit card is very common. Especially the latter is sometimes necessary if you want to pay online since there is usually no iDeal here, where you can pay with your regular Dutch bank account. In stores and supermarkets, both cash and card are accepted, which is also usually the same in restaurants. However, having some cash on hand is always handy, if there are difficulties with your card, or they don't accept them.</p>



STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

I studied in the French track, as well as in the small-scale AEP programme and took the courses CEP Études Politiques; CEP Culture Generale; CEP Langue et Civilisation Française, Défense: stratégies, politiques et économie; Critical Security Studies; Introduction aux fondamentaux de l'économie; Théorie de la communication politique; Institutions européennes; Etat et gouvernement en Afrique; and Histoire et Géopolitique de l'Amérique latine. You can choose from Year 1 to Year 4 (Masters) courses in French and English.

Generally, there is an English and a French track. If you have a B1 or higher, you are expected to enrol in the French track. The AEP/CEP programme is available to around 25 exchange students from the French track, that pass an additional, voluntary exam on politics in French. That means, that you have three seminar courses in French with that group of 25 students and are expected to take a minimum of 30 credits of French courses (including the 12 credits from these 3 seminar courses). Staying for one year allows you to obtain the Attestation des Études Politiques while staying one year will grant you the Certificat des études Politiques. They are both helpful if you are thinking about applying to a French university or another Sciences Po Institute in the future. The only difference is, that the CEP grants you some additional advantages when applying to a master programme at Sciences Po. There is also more information on that given to you at the start of the year, as well as on their website. If you already have a good understanding of French and are up for the challenge, I would highly advise you to try out for this programme, since it gives you some additional interaction next to the lectures, and you will automatically get close with the seminar group.

In general, most courses are based on political science but occasionally, also economics, philosophy, information science or history courses are available or mixed with the general course content. All the courses you can take as an exchange student are lecture-based, aside from the AEP/CEP seminars. That means, per course, you will have 90 min lectures each week and depending on the course structure, there may be readings or questionnaires to be prepared. Because there are no blocks, you will take all courses at once except for some minor credit courses, that start a little later. So, you can have around 6 or more courses at once to attend and prepare for. However, there have been a lot of courses, that did not require any readings or only one reading per week, which is a much lighter amount of preparation for each course, than what I am used to. Nevertheless, that also means, that attendance and note-taking are vital in these courses, as the exams will be based on what the teacher says each week.

The exams usually consist of a few essay-type questions on the course material. In some cases, there are also multiple-choice questionnaires or essays to be handed in. As Erasmus students, some courses will have different types of exams prepared for you than for the regular students. So, the questions may be a little easier to understand or more openly formulated. Yet, that does not make them ultimately easier than any other exam you may take at UU. So, preparation remains important.

academic quality of education activities

The academic environment and understanding of studying vary in France and the Netherlands. Most of my courses in Utrecht were focused on the seminars and interaction between different students and teachers. Depending on the programme you follow at ScPoBx, most of the courses are lecture-based without additional seminars. So, following the lectures and taking extensive notes is of main importance. However, since there are more weeks than regularly at UU, I and other UU students noticed, that the content was stretched over a longer period of time, thus making the courses less quick-paced than I was personally used to. Thus, there was a bigger emphasis on specific examples or case studies.

As the year is structured in semesters and not blocks, all the exams are at the very end of the semester in the span of around two weeks. So, it can happen, that all your 6-8 exams are within 10 days. Therefore, preparation and having good summaries are good ways to start your studying process.



Generally, there is little contact with the professors themselves and a lot of the course and your success depends on your self-study. In that sense, there is less guidance and counselling than what I have experienced at UU.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The communication with Mme Dubâa, the foreign exchange officer, was always very quick, polite and helpful. So, all issues that arose were usually resolved very swiftly. As mentioned above, the contact with the professors and teachers was not as close as at UU. However, if you had a specific question you could always contact them after the lectures or via e-mail and the reply would also usually be kind and swift.

transfer of credits

The transfer of credits went smoothly and without much hassle.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

At the start of the year, there is one preparation stage, during which there are presentations on being a student at ScPoBx, a Language test and language courses based on your current level of French. Next to that, Erasmix (the Erasmus network) organises a variety of city tours, events, and trips to show you around the city and region. You are also assigned a Buddy, which you can ask questions about student life, living in Bordeaux and just generally meet up with. Depending on how close you get you would meet up regularly or these connections would eventually fade out. However, as a first introduction, this was very helpful to have. Overall, the orientation and welcome programme were structured and organised very well.

accommodation

The student accommodation by Crous in Village 3 was located near a tram stop and very close to campus. The only downside was the size of the 9m² studio, however, I got used to it quickly and was glad to pay a lot less than for any similar type of accommodation in the city. Depending on the village and type of studio, you get assigned, the size can vary between around 9 and 12 m² for small studios or can also be a little bigger in the shared apartments that are available in other accommodations. Crous offers a repair service if things break around the apartment, which is easily accessible, yet the waiting times can sometimes be a little long. The area around campus has a lot of construction sites, so the villages are not in the prettiest neighbourhood. But usually, the tram and bus stops are not very far, and most students spend more time in the city or the university building, anyhow.

If you want to live closer to the city centre or are looking for something on the private market, the situation is rather similar to the one in Utrecht. Rent is relatively high, usually, you will find a room in shared apartments, and it's best to start early.

Overall, the decision of where to live and in which area, depends heavily on your priorities and which trade-offs you are willing to make. For me, having a relatively cheap place with a secured contract was more important than living in the centre or a pretty neighbourhood. So, living on campus was practical in that sense.

leisure & culture

Albeit living in Pessac, going to the city centre by tram only took around 20 minutes. There is a monthly tariff for young people and students, which costs around 30-40€ a month, with which you can travel by tram or bus. So, living further outside of the city centre is still viable. Bordeaux itself has a lot of museums, theatres and sights to offer, as well as its beautiful historic city centre. It's a beautiful city with lots of history, many cafés, bars, and shopping streets. Taking your time to explore the city and its culture was my favourite past time but the location also allowed me to travel to nearby cities and the capital over the weekends, or our break, we had in the middle of the semester.

The university itself also offers many associations on any theme or topic. There are lots of sports clubs, art associations, bands, choirs and so on. Personally, since I felt that this was a very French association, I joined the wine association which offered wine tastings, tours on châteaux a gala, and more. Overall, it was great fun,



since I was able to learn more about wine and its importance to the region, as well as get to know other international and French students.

suggestions/tips

I would prioritize leisure, travelling and exploring the city over finding a great apartment. With the monthly tram card, the distance does not matter as much, so also living in Pessac or Talence is definitely possible to save some money on rent. Also, from Bordeaux, there are busses to Arcachon or other places along the coast, where you can go with friends on a day off or the weekend.

Also, since you can select your courses throughout the first one to two weeks, you can consider leaving Friday or Monday off, so that you have a long weekend for travelling around France.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

I would definitely recommend the destination for everyone, that would like to improve their language skills, get to know the French life style and experience another academic culture. The experience was very valuable to me in terms of living in another foreign country different to the Netherlands and Germany, and being "forced" to actively speak French. This different study culture was also interesting to experience as a means to have a better comparison with the Dutch ways, as well as having more perspective on what I may expect if I choose to study my Masters in another country.

Next to that, Bordeaux was a great place to live because of its beauty and richness in all kinds of activities and ways to spend your free time. Also, travelling within France, as well as to Spain, which is very close, is possible thanks to the location.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

PREPARATION

exchange application process

I was nominated by my UU exchange coordinator for the exchange at Sciences Po Bordeaux and after some time I have received an email from the exchange coordinator from Sciences Po with a link to register. When you register you will be asked about your French and English level as well as a proof for both. When your French level is higher than B1, you will be automatically put into the French track.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The support from UU was very helpful. As Bordeaux was not my first choice, I had to make my decision for Bordeaux rather last-minute. Despite that, I always received a helping answer shortly. Additionally, there were preparation meetings with information about practicalities, important to-dos before the departure and we could also ask questions to older students who have been on exchange before.

academic preparation

I personally did not do any academic preparation for my stay.

language preparation

I refreshed my French level a bit before going to France, however as my level was below B1 I planned to take English courses.

finances

Regarding finances, I was happy to receive the Erasmus grant for my exchange.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD



study programme (content and organisational issues)

When you arrive at Sciences Po, you will receive the overview of all courses and timeslots and during the first two weeks you can go to any courses you like (so that you get an impression and based on that you will have to fill out a form with the courses you eventually plan to take after the first two weeks have passed). What is different to Utrecht University is that most courses amount to "only" 4 ECTS, some have 8 and others also 2 ECTS. However there is the possibility to double your credits by writing a term paper which I personally did not do but some others. This is at least the case for the English track. So it is up to you whether you prefer more courses or rather writing additional papers. The exams were at the end of the semester, for which you get one week to prepare and then the exams are usually all packed into two weeks, sometimes also more than one per day. However I would not worry about the exams, in some courses there is also a difference between Sciences Po and Erasmus students in terms of examination. For me in the end it was 7 exams and one paper, which was doable.

academic quality of education activities

I only took English courses so I can only speak for the English courses which were partly some Master courses (which you are allowed to take) and some English courses created only for international students. Overall I would say that the level is definitely not too high. What is different to my UU degree is that you are not expected to prepare for the lessons, also since there are basically only lectures and no seminars with active participation like at UU.

Apart from the regular courses, I also took a French language course two times a week for which you can receive 6 ECTS. The level of French course was determined based on the test you are expected to take in the introduction week. I was in the French course with about 12 other students and overall I definitely improved my French. So I would recommend to anyone in the English track to take a French course

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

There is a contact person at Sciences Po responsible for providing information in the introduction week, signing the Learning Agreement, registering you for courses but also any other questions you might have. She is available via email and she was always very helpful.

transfer of credits

The transfer of credits has not been done yet, so I can't say anything about it yet.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There is a obligatory introduction week for the exchange students (for which you can also receive 2 ECTS) and it is a mix between administrative/ information meetings (also about opening a French bank account and housing assistance) and social events organized by the Erasmus association, Erasmix. Activities in the first week were a tour of the university building, a lunch, a guided city tour in Bordeaux, a winetasting, a trip to Archachon and the dune du Pilat and a party. I was also matched with a French buddy who I could ask all questions and who was very helpful. The Erasmix association has also organized many events throughout the semester like Pub Quiz, boulangerie tour, movie night, parties and many other activities.

accommodation

I applied for the student housing, CROUS, for which you receive information from the contact person at Sciences Po. There is a deadline for applying and you can indicate your preferences about the different accommodations. Around the middle of July, I was informed that I got a CROUS room which I decided to take. It is quite small and basic but also relatively cheap. Also be aware that the CROUS accommodations are located in Pessac where the university is located (its similar to the Sciences Park in Utrecht). If you prefer to live in the city, then I would recommend that you look for private housing through websites or facebook. This will be probably more expensive and more paperwork but it could also be nice to live in a shared accommodation with French flatmates.



leisure & culture
Bordeaux is a wonderful city to live it. It offers many restaurants, bars, nice markets and shops, interesting museums, beautiful parks and the river Garonne. The city has a good size and everything can easily be reached by tram or bike if you like! Apart from that, Bordeaux' location is also very nice and offers trips to Arcachon, many beach cities for surfing, cities like Biarritz and San Sebastian and lastly Paris in only two hours with the TGV. There is also a wine association of the university which you can join to have about weekly wine tastings and visits to chateaus.
suggestions/tips
Think about where it is more important for you to live close to university and avoid the busy tramway during rush hour or prefer to live in downtown Bordeaux - both has pro's and con's. Also join an association - there are many different ones - to get to know French students.

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
Overall I can absolutely recommend Bordeaux as an exchange destination. It was very nice to study at a French university and get a new perspective on certain topics, although to be honest I would say that the academic level is a bit lower than I was used to. As for the life in Bordeaux, it is very nice, learning more about French culture, it always helps if you speak French and I would definitely recommend to explore Bordeaux on some weekends as well as to small trips to cities closeby.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Profitez-bien!

PREPARATION
exchange application process
I had no trouble with the application process.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
Attending the study abroad week and the information sessions turned out to be very helpful. I got numerous good tips and it made me feel more prepared for going abroad.
academic preparation
I have not done any academic preparation.
language preparation
Initially, I wanted to take French classes before going. Even though I decided to do the English track (I dropped French in highschool after 3 years), I thought it was a good idea to get a good basis in French before going. However, I ended up not doing any classes. I would recommend to both take French classes before going, and to just go for the French track, even if you think your French is too bad. My friends in the French track told me all French track teachers take into account the Erasmus students, give them easier exams or assignments and the French students are very willing to help and share notes. Since improving my French is one of the most valuable things I took home from my exchange, just take some classes before and do the French track to take the most out of improving your French.
finances
I financed my exchange with the Erasmus grant and the Dutch studiefinanciering. I saved up some money before, but could get around quite well with the grant and my studiefinanciering.



STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The programme is largely focussed on international relations. There were about 20-25 courses to choose from, of which you need 6-8 for 30 credits (most courses are only one lecture per week). When doing the French track, you can choose from a considerably higher amount of courses. Also, you can choose Master's courses, which are a bit more demanding but way more interesting.

academic quality of education activities

If you're mainly going for really good education, thinking the "grand école" Science Po which "only admits 5% of applicants" is going to provide this, you will be disappointed. Especially bachelor's courses are very unchallenging, and the French education system is quite archaic and very different from Dutch/UU education. Courses are largely based on one-way teaching, in which professors give lectures and students listen. All French students (quite hilariously) just literally copy every single word the professor says, and rarely give their own opinions or engage in discussions. Furthermore, teaching is way more focussed on factual knowledge, e.g. factual events the years something happened.

However, not all my courses were bad, I had a few I actually enjoyed, and I can only speak for the English track. I heard slightly better stories about the French track courses, but it's still very different teaching from The Netherlands.

The big upside of all of this: the academic workload is minimal, so my exchange almost felt like a holiday to learn French, meet new people and discover the French lifestyle and culture.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Support was easy to reach when needed. I contracted Covid during my exchange, and the university supported me by advising me and arranging matters for my courses.

transfer of credits

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The orientation week was quite busy, with activities almost every day, but very fun to get to know the other students and Bordeaux. We made trips to nearby villages, had a welcome party, a bunch of information, a tour around Bordeaux and all other things you'd expect from an orientation week. Also, participating in the orientation week grants 2 credits!

accommodation

Finding accommodation in Bordeaux is difficult. I didn't have anything when I arrived, and lived in an Airbnb for the first week during which I could do viewings. I was lucky to find a room with a French woman and her son within this first week, but many erasmus students had a lot more trouble finding places. "Le bon coin" is the place to go for "colocs" (sharing apartments) and I found my room there, but just scout out every single website you can find well ahead of time.

One thing: whatever you do, DO NOT get a room at the campus (CROUS housing)! Every single person living there hated it. The campus is really far out of the city, rooms are small, dirty, some have very few windows, the campus is just depressing, as everything is grey and there is not a single thing to do. However tempting it may look to go for the easy route of campus housing, just don't do it. It's not worth it.

leisure & culture

Leisure and culture is amazing in Bordeaux, and the reason why I enjoyed my exchange so much. Bordeaux is filled with gezellige little squares which are filled with people every single night of the week. Especially if you like nice food and wine, Bordeaux is very nice. It has an insane amount of cute restaurants and terraces and a lot of places nearby to visit for winetastings.



Being next to the Atlantic ocean, I spent many days at the beach surfing or just drinking wine. The university also offers about 25 sports for free, so you can get to know French students and have cool parties and trips with them. For instance, I got very very good climbing classes twice a week and even went on a climbing weekend trip to the Dordogne completely facilitated by the university climbing association. There are also about 20 student associations at Sciences Po, ranging from philosophy or debating to wine tasting or improv. The Erasmus association from Sciences Po (erasmix) organises many very fun events and parties for all Erasmus students. Because Sciences Po is not that big, you get to know all exchange students very quickly. I spent countless evenings sitting at the "quai" (the riverside), going to bars and clubs, going to house parties, all with (Erasmus) students from Sciences Po.

suggestions/tips

You can get a free bike at "MAMMA" during the whole semester. Bordeaux is relatively nice/safe to bike (emphasis on relatively).

DON'T go for campus housing.

Don't live too far outside of Bordeaux. The neighbouring municipalities (e.g. Pessac, Bègles, Mérignac) are different towns, but you don't really notice that as they are directly connected to Bordeaux and also considered part of the Bordeaux metropolitan area. Living in one of those towns (the campus is also in one of them) is fine, but just consider not going too far away from Bordeaux itself as this is where everything happens.

Bordeaux is quite expensive (e.g. 0.5 beers are often 7 euros or more), at least more expensive than what I expected. It's about equal to Dutch prices.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Absolutely yes, it was an amazing way to meet people, improve my French and dive into French culture. I had an amazing time. I would definitely recommend it, except if good education is your number one priority for your exchange (which I think it rarely is for anyone).

do you have any additional advice or comments?

No

2019-2020

PREPARATION

exchange application process

I was the first student of the Law faculty applying for Sciences Po Bordeaux. There was a clear online registration procedure for the university. Besides I had to provide a lot of information on paper. Be aware of the bureaucracy in France. In the end everything worked out well!

counselling & support at Utrecht University

Overall the support and counselling at Utrecht University was good. The University is easy to contact. Because I was the first student of the Law faculty to go to Sciences Po there were some minor uncertainties. For an example for proving your language level an official ERC certificate is not required. Also, when your language level is B1 or higher you will be automatically placed for the 'French track', even if Utrecht University applies you for the 'English track'.

academic preparation

There was no real need for academic preparation for me. The courses taken at Sciences Po were extra courses in my bachelor program.



language preparation

My language level was B2 when I arrived in France. I refreshed my knowledge by reading a book in French and revising some old grammar from high school. Since the required level was B1 there was no real need to prepare more. Nevertheless the level of French in the lectures is quite high, so I would have preferred to have a higher level before starting the courses. In my opinion, following the courses with a level below B2 is not doable.

finances

I knew Bordeaux was quite an expensive city, not housing and the hospitality sector but also the normal supermarket. I saved some money and highered my students loan, that was sufficient.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

It is not possible to choose your courses in advance. Besides, the courses in the course catalogue are not all available for Erasmus students. In the first week you will get a course list where you can choose from. In the first week you have the opportunity to try out all courses you're interested in and choose later which ones you prefer. This system worked well for me, I could check out which courses were interesting and which professors I could understand well (in French). Erasmus students can only attend the lectures and not the seminars for the courses, this made the courses less interactive. All exams are at the end of the semester. Most courses are rewarded by 4 ECTS so you will have around eight exams. You can choose a language course and a sports class as well. I experienced both as really nice. There are a lot of sports classes you can attend such as, surfing, dancing, athletics, various team sports, climbing, horse riding, and cross fit.

academic quality of education activities

I took two courses in English from the fourth year, which were on a similar level as the English taught courses in Law at Utrecht University. The other courses in French were quite hard because of the language barrier. I managed to receive notes from French students to help me study the course. The language course I took was adjusted to my level according to a test I had to take in the beginning of the semester.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The contact with Sciences Po was good. There is a central contact person that explains a lot in the introduction week. I could reach her quite easily by mail and in person in University. You can contact her in French as well as in English.

transfer of credits

It took more than a month before I received an e-mail with my grades. So be aware you cannot graduate immediately after returning from your Erasmus.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The welcoming was very nice! There is an Erasmus association that organises a lot in the first week of arrival. You will be coupled to a student 'buddy' who will help you with difficulties and as a sort of first friend abroad. The first meeting with other Erasmus students from Sciences Po was with a casual picnic. In the first week there are some general lectures with explanation about the course system, the university and housing. Next to that, there are cultural activities like a city walk, a wine tasting and parties.

accommodation

Housing in Bordeaux is expensive and hard to find. Watch out for scams on online platforms. I rented an Airbnb for the first two weeks and got an accommodation via other students. When you are in Bordeaux finding housing will be a lot easier. I applied for student housing on the campus which was priced well, but the process was hard and in the end I did not get a spot. The university and the campus are outside of the city (similar to the Uithof), so be aware that you won't be living in the centre when you apply for campus housing.



leisure & culture
Bordeaux is a super vibrant city. There are many bars, restaurants, parcs, markets and musea. The city has a rich history and architecture. It is easy to go by bus to the atlantic ocean or one of the vineyards. In late summer people gather at the river side to relax with friends. The night life takes place in big clubs, bars and pubs are closing at 2.
suggestions/tips
Buying a bike is handy because the tram is not always running and the city is quite large.

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I can highly recommend Bordeaux as a destination abroad. The combination of a vibrant city in the south of France and the sea close by was perfect for me. Studying at Sciences Po was different from what I expected because I could only attend the lectures and the exams contained a lot of learning by heart in stead of making your own interpretation. Nevertheless, studying in the French language was a big pré and the sports class was super nice. I got really close with the Erasmus students of Sciences Po because everyone was in the same university and taking the same courses. This was a big advantage for me compared to a multi-faculty university.
do you have any additional advice or comments?

Institut d'Etudes Politiques de BORDEAUX

UU Report form - 2016-2017

preparation
exchange/placement application process
The application process went smoothly. Sciences PO Bordeaux was my first choice, so I got appointed to my first choice. I am not sure whether there was a strong competition with other candidates, but in 2016-2017 there were three spots available. I emphasized most on my motivation letter.
counselling/support at home university
During the preparation phase, there was a lot of information provided by the home university during meetings and via documents. Also, any questions were rapidly answered via the mail.
academic preparation
I didn't do any academic preparations before going on this exchange. By the time I went on this exchange I had finished all my obligated courses for the bachelor B&O.
language preparation
I followed an intensive language course at Alliance Francaise during the 5 months before my departure. By the time I left, my language level was around B1.



finances

I haven't saved much money for my exchange. Prices in Bordeaux are comparable with the prices in Utrecht (However, Bordeaux is a little bit more expensive). The advantage of going on an exchange in Europe is that you will receive the Erasmus Grant, while I do not receive student financing in the Netherlands anymore. Also flights and traveling to Bordeaux can be very cheap. Together with my Erasmus grant, compensations for transport in the Netherlands, 'zorgtoeslag', support of my parents and around 500 euro of savings I was able to pay for the full exchange.

study/placement abroad period

study programme/work plan (concerning content and organisational issues)

It was not difficult for me to choose the courses I wanted to follow because all the ECTS I obtained were extra credits on top of my bachelor. Therefore, I didn't really have any restrictions (only it is not allowed to follow similar courses you already had obtained). However, the courses that I was able to follow in Bordeaux during my exchange were different from the courses that were shared with me beforehand, and unfortunately some courses that I really wanted to follow were skipped from the list. Next to this, I applied for the English Track which gave me very limited choice in available courses. Since Sciences PO is a French institution, many courses are given in French. However, after some adaptations from my initial learning plan, I still managed to make an



interesting study plan for 30 ECTS.
academic quality of education/placement activities
<p>Even though Sciences Po is well known in France as a very high quality University, the academic quality is not outstanding to me. There is little to no interaction during the courses and some teachers seemed to be not very motivated or unable to transfer their knowledge in an inspiring or clear way. Some courses didn't seem to be well structured. Also, there is little emphasis on the tests, which can work out positive or negative to you. Sometimes you will get easily a very high mark without much effort and with questions that are given beforehand, and sometimes you need to finish a course with an oral exam of only 5 minutes and obtain 4 ECTS, and for some other courses you have to do a test, a presentation and write a paper for only 2 ECTS. Teachers at Sciences PO are very autonomous so there seems to be no clear rules on what must be done to finish a course.</p>
counselling/support at host institution/organisation
<p>During my stay, the international office was there to help you when you had any questions. However, there were two people working at the international office and one of them was not very supportive. Myself and other students encountered some problems in the communication. Also, the French way of organising things is that it is very bureaucratic and not very flexible, but not always as clear or well organised. This makes it hard to find out what they expect from you and you can expect for example some last minute announced obligated meetings or deadlines.</p>
transfer of credits
The transfer of credits went okay.
student life
welcome/orientation programme
<p>Sciences PO organised a three-day welcome party which was very nice. We went to St-Emilion (a very nice and old wine city) and a wine chateau for a wine-tasting and we did a guided tour through Bordeaux. Next to this, some presentations were organised to provide us with knowledge about the Sciences PO, the region and Bordeaux.</p>
accommodation
<p>Finding accommodation in Bordeaux can be just as difficult as finding a place in Utrecht. There are not many student rooms available and prices in the city centre are on average higher than in Utrecht. The university provides campus accommodation; however, the campus is 30 minutes away from the city centre by tram, and trams do not go 24/7. The plus side of campus accommodation is that it is very cheap, but there is nothing to do at the campus (there is not even a supermarket) and since the campus is so isolated it is not a very safe place.</p> <p>Some months before my exchange Sciences Po also provided some names of house owners in the city centre. I responded to one of these offers which provided me a room before my departure on one of the best locations in Bordeaux for a reasonable price (€490) It was nice to know that you have a place to stay before you leave to</p>



Bordeaux. I was going to stay with 3 other international students from Sciences Po, so I was very excited. However, when I arrive there were some issues with the landlady. She was not willing to provide us a contract and she wanted us to pay the rent in cash. Next to this she had some rules that she hadn't shared with us beforehand. For example, a fee of 8 euros per person a night when you had any visitors. Also, the Wi-Fi was really slow and there was most of the time no hot water in the shower. We complained about our situation at Sciences PO and they decided to take here of the list they send to the international students.

But in the end everything worked out. I was in the lucky situation that three friends that I have made in the first month found an apartment for 4 people (All three of them have spend the first month in hostels because they were not able to find accommodation). I accepted the offer to move in with them and left the shady landlady. Luckily the apartment was perfect and this landlady was very helpful, so we had a great time together.

I do really recommend to find a place to stay in the city centre, since Bordeaux is beautiful and you are free to go where and whenever you want. The only thing is that you need to be aware of shady landowners and if you do not trust the situation you have to speak up or find another place to stay if possible. Also try to not be afraid to make clear arrangements with your landlady.

leisure/culture

Bordeaux is a very nice city and truly beautiful. It is also quite a clean and safe city. Even though I have heard some stories, nothing happened to me on the streets and I didn't felt unsafe or anything. What I really love about Bordeaux is that it is not too big, but you will not easily get bored. I really enjoyed just walking around, spend time in one of the many wine bars and enjoy the French atmosphere. I also made some trips to places in the area. Bordeaux is approximately an hour away from the Atlantic Ocean. I also made some trips in Europe with the friends that I have made. I didn't expect to travel that much, but especially people from America and Canada want to do a full Europe 'Roadtrip' and it is very nice to join. The atmosphere in Bordeaux is comparable to Utrecht, but the centre is bigger. If you want to experience how it is to live in a very big city, Bordeaux is not the place to go. Bordeaux is often called 'little' Paris and the people in Bordeaux are proud to say that Bordeaux is as nice as Paris but without the many tourists and with friendly people. This is again a little bit comparable with the competition between a city as Amsterdam and a city as Utrecht.

suggestions/tips

Something I really recommend is to become part of the Wine Association of Sciences PO Bordeaux. You pay €20 euro once which gives you access to weekly wine tastings and even a wonderful wine gala at a very beautiful wine chateau. During these wine tastings, I have learned a lot about the French wine culture and since the tastings were in French I improved my language skills at the same time.

conclusions

would you recommend this host organisation/destination to others? please explain



All in all, I would recommend an exchange in Bordeaux even besides the downsides I have mentioned earlier. I really enjoyed myself and I had a great time. This has more to do with Bordeaux as a destination and the friends that I have made then with the host organisations. A lot of students complained about the courses and the home institution, but still it is possible to fix these problems and to enjoy yourself. Before and during your stay it is important to keep up a positive mind-set and try to be open and flexible.

do you have any additional advice or comments?



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PREPARATION
exchange application process
The application process was pretty smooth, my first choice for a destination was Bordeaux.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
Utrecht University organised an information meeting, which I couldn't attend unfortunately. I was however kept up to date by documents with information about the process of application, deadlines to receive the erasmus grants and usefull tips conserning housing and living abroad. In addition I stayed in touch with the UU about possible courses I could choose when I was already in Bordeaux. This was really helpful, because you always need to make sure if the courses you take abroad can be incorporated in your study program at home.
academic preparation
I did not really do any academic preparation, I expected the education level to be lower then in the Netherlands.
language preparation
I took french as a final exam cours at high school. In preparation for this exange I took a language course at Alliance Francaise in Utrecht. Besides this I tried to follow a course at the language faculty with students that had already studied the french language for 1,5 year, but it turned out that the level of french was way too high to keep up.
finances
I received the grant from the Dutch government, the eramsus grant and a small montly contribution form my parents. I used my own savings to do some extra travelling and to not have to worry too much about doing the fun things you do when on Erasmus.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
My study programme was very varied. The courses I had selected on forehand were (with some exeptions) not available. The actual choosing process therefor really took place in Bordeaux. At Sciencespo you get 4 credits for every cours and there is no re-sits for exams, so taking more courses than you need is recommended. There are two 'tracks' at sciencespo, english and french track. I chose french track and chose two english classes too. I scored sufficient for all my courses, but I did not have a lot of courses because I already had collected too much credits for my study program. During the semester I did go to most of my classes, but I didn't do a lot of studying untill the last weeks before the exams. The professors only use lectures, so no books or articles. Studying consists only of learning the notes by heart. Using interaction in the lectures is not usual, I have never done a presentation or discussion. This might also be the case because you can not take classes in small groups, only plenary courses if you are at Sciencespo for half a year. The content of the courses was pretty diverse, I took classes in international relations, urban studies and the political system of france. Besides this, a language course is given once a week at university and gives you 4 ECTS if you score sufficient.
academic quality of education activities
In my opinion the quality of education at sciencespo is not very high, because I think critical thinking and interaction is very essential in a study program. I did however learn quite a lot (when exams got near) because the profesors sometimes give you an enormous amount of information in the courses. I got the impression that



professors have a lot of freedom on how to form their lessons and general courses. This is in my opinion not a very good thing because a lot of professors only offer one perspective (their own). There are also occasions where this freedom for professors turns out really positive, I took a very interesting international relations class thought by monsieur Battistella. I would definitely recommend this to everyone!

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The counselling and support at the receiving university was given by two ladies. Sometimes they didn't provide sufficient information on time, but most of the time the administrative stuff is manageable. You are always together with all the other exchange students in the insecurity about administration, missing courses, teachers and other issues. So it will be alright, but keep in mind that you really need to do the thinking yourself sometimes, because the counselling and support at sciencespo is sometimes not really efficient and fast.

transfer of credits

At Sciencespo you can score from 0-20. My subjects have not yet been incorporated in my study program at the UU but they will transfer the 0-20 marks to our normal 0-10 system.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There was an entire week dedicated to introduction. In this week you will visit a village in the neighbourhood of Bordeaux, you will take a language test to see what your level of French is, you will get information about French politics and university and there are activities aimed at getting to know other students.

accommodation

I didn't have a room yet when I went to Bordeaux, in the end I found a place with a French family via 'cartesdecologs' a French website to find accommodation with roommates. It is very hard to find something in Bordeaux centre but I would still recommend this over living on campus outside of the city, which is arranged with the university at Bordeaux. When you do want to live on campus however, be prepared to give your entire life in paper work. I really enjoyed living in the centre because I was always close to all the important things and events and it really made me love the city more. There are some helpful sites like cartesdecologs that will help you find something in the centre. If there is a phone number stated in a room offer, calling always helps! People receive a million emails, but giving them a call will really make you stand out. Tramline B will bring you to the university, so living close to it is preferable, but it also depends on how long you are willing to travel to uni. I had around 50 minutes travel time because I had to take tramline A before I could reach line B. Living with a family was okay for me because it helped improve my French a lot and that was a major aim of my exchange. My family was really understanding and easy going with everything, so it wasn't a problem in any way. Living with French students probably is the most perfect situation because you are forced to speak the language and there are no complications of living in a family.

leisure & culture

Bordeaux is an amazing city, with a lot of free activities, festivals and sports, especially in summer. This is perfect for students. There is a commission at sciencespo which organises events for Erasmus students and you can get linked with a local buddy if you like. Bordeaux has a lot of bars and restaurants, it really is a city for people who love food and culture. Partying is possible, but the real dance clubs are situated in pretty bad neighbourhoods. There are plenty of house parties and parties organised by ESN and other Erasmus organisations however. In combination with all the nice bars and places around town there really is never a dull moment. The city itself really is lovely and there is an active association life at sciencespo. You can join sport teams and more cultural associations. This is mixed with the local students and can be really fun. The wine association is a really cool way to learn more about wine and the way French people look towards wine. You get a lot of tastings at university and at 'castles' where you get to taste a lot of high quality wines.

suggestions/tips



Just go! Bordeaux was my perfect Erasmus destination; it has wine, croissants, bars on every corner, very well structured trams running through the city, a lot of cool free sports places (skateboarding, basketball beachvolleyball), the beach close by and way more.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes, Lonely Plante has named Bordeaux the best city to visit, living there as an Erasmus student is so much fun! I didn't think the university was very inspiring but that was not the most important thing in my exchange.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

No



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PREPARATION
exchange application process
The deadline was quite early which made choosing for a study abroad a bit stressful as you had to make choices far in advance. The communication for acceptance was fine as the mandatory parts of the application itself.
counselling & support at Utrecht University
I had one meeting before leaving about things to think about like insurances. The meeting was fine and I could call the International Office of Utrecht for further questions. The communication between my home university and the receiving one did not always seem perfect as, for example, I had a hard time finding a place to stay.
academic preparation
There has been no academic preparation. I chose my courses from the website of the receiving university of which most of it I couldn't actually follow in the end. The courses were similar to my home courses, the level was also good, I had no real difficulties so academic preparation might not have been necessary.
language preparation
In my case, this has not been necessary/mandatory because I am a native speaker of the language of the receiving university.
finances
In the application process, it has been mandatory to look at my finances for the exchange period. This has been helpful as it made me think of choices to make or dependences I might not have thought about.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
As I mentioned before, I was not able to take most of the courses I chose before. I had to make new choices. Therefore we were given about three weeks to go to classes and make a choice. I thought it was a bit odd that we had to hand in a paper with our choices instead of handing it in online, but this might be a difference between cultures rather than quality. The courses were interesting and, even though some had similar aspects to the ones I took at home, I was given a new perspective on different subjects.
academic quality of education activities
I joined a students' association that organized meetings about wines of Bordeaux. It has been really fun and instructive. The activities were well organized. The exchange students had much more options to join into clubs/associations!
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The counselling has been very various. Some questions were answered right away but others were rudely received. The international office had some issues sometimes to communicate with the core of the university but in the end almost everything was made possible for exchange students which I thought was very positive.
transfer of credits
It is difficult for me to write about this topic since my credits have not been fully transferred yet.

STUDENT LIFE



welcome & orientation programme
In Bordeaux there is an introduction week in which we had different activities and small courses. The activities were wonderful and the small courses useful. Most of them talked about overall knowledge about France, it has been a fun way to get in touch with the country.
accommodation
I had a hard time finding an accommodation since my application was not accepted because of my double nationality. This has been a difficult point of my exchange and I was lucky I found a room in the end. More students encountered the same difficulties. Also French students have a hard time looking for an accommodation which makes it even more difficult as an exchange student. In the end, I have nothing to complain about since I found a nice place to stay off campus.
leisure & culture
I already knew a bit about the culture since I was born in France and lived there for some time. In my exchange period I reconnected with "my roots" and experienced all the clichés and culture of the country. In the weekends, I visited with others museums and monuments. I did more cultural activities in my exchange period than I do in normal life.
suggestions/tips
The difficulty for accommodation could have been communicated so I could have prepared myself. Other than that I do not have suggestions.

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I would recommend this university/destination if you want to learn the language and to know more about this culture. France has a lot to see and going to this country implies learning (at least a bit of) the language. As for the organisation, I have nothing to compare with and it was overall fine.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
I have no additional advice or comments.

